

January 1, 2005

Gleanings

By Gerald R. Chester, Ph.D.

New Year's Resolution – Consider Holistic Living

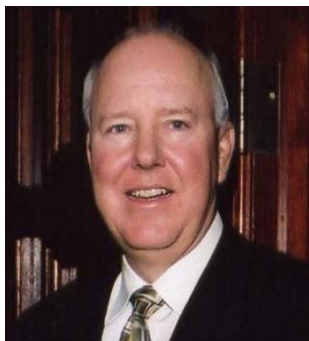
About thirty years ago, Jim Goodnight started a company named SAS, which stands for “statistical analysis software.” The focus of the company was to provide software for statisticians.

As SAS grew, employees were hired, many of whom were young females. These ladies would typically work a few years, long enough to become really valuable to the company, and then quit to have children.

Goodnight was distressed at this phenomenon of young gifted workers leaving the workplace when they were making great contributions. Furthermore, the costs of replacing these workers were substantial. Experts estimate the cost of replacing talented workers at one to two and a half times the salary of the person replaced (“Sanity, Inc.” by Charles Fishman, *FastCompany*, 21 January 1999, p. 84).

Pragmatically, it made no sense to Goodnight to lose talented workers; hence, he began developing programs to retain them.

What do women of child-bearing age need to motivate them to continue their careers while bearing and raising children? How about a holistic approach to life that values family life as much as work? That would be a new approach for corporate America, which is largely driven by money. Bending the knee to the idol of money means that everything is sacrificed for the sake of making money. So what does it look like to live holistically? Or how does one balance family and work so that personal, family, emotional, and financial needs are met?



The following are some of the ways SAS encourages holistic lifestyles for its workers:

- Family mealtimes in the company cafeteria
- A company daycare facility
- A company exercise facility
- A company culture where work is fun
- Unlimited sick time
- 7-hour workdays

Does this work for SAS? It works beautifully! The turnover rate for the typical software company is 19 percent per year; for SAS it is 2.4 percent per year—the lowest in the industry. This means that SAS's expenses for recruiting are substantially lower than the industry norm. These savings are invested back into the employees to develop benefits that promote holistic worker lifestyles. What a great way to express love to workers!

As you consider your New Year's resolutions, consider holistic living. A holistic approach to life is the healthy balancing of every area of your life—your personal life, your family life, your work life, your spiritual life, and your community life.

Yes, you need money, but more than money you need a balanced life. Consider New Year's resolutions in each area of life—personal, family, work, spiritual, and community. What will you do over the next year to improve your life in each of these areas?

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